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Blockley. June 24th 1848.

Dear Miss Parsons

Your last letter with its warm expression of sympathy, was truly welcome to me - I have had to steel my heart to so many unworthy doubts to petrify natural sensibility & true delicacy of feeling, & encase myself in so stout an armor, in order to force my way along a very difficult path, that when a woman comes to me full of deep feeling, with a true appreciation of my motives, a clear insight into the grand scope of my mission, & heartily bids me God-speed - my soul leaps for joy, at the recognition from the inmost depths of my being I bless her.

You speak of the hereditary attraction you have felt in the same direction Would to Heaven, I could find one like you, to join me in my course, it would increase my strength tenfold, but I know for you this is out of the question, physical weakness would exclude you from the rank of pioneer, still your spirit is with me, and already I have derived aid from its presence. This study of medecine is no easy task, to a conscientious associationist - I do not speak of the difficulties I experience as a woman from the narrow sectarianism of the profession, and the care with which they exclude me from the few opportunities of real instruction, which their system of education embraces - but the incoherence of the system itself, its want of satisfactory principles, from which to build a science, its very uncertain, unsatisfactory practice, its bigotry, the total absence of a lofty Catholic spirit - all these things are terrible to an associationist, firmly

believing, in the solidarity of the Universe, in the reign of divine order in the minutest as in the loftiest creations - filled with a living faith, that nothing stands alone, in the great manifestation of Almighty Love, nothing is in vain, nothing dead, and that only by discovering the soul, the source of each phenomenon, by learning its relations to the whole universe, can truth on any subject be known, and that without this living faith this true wisdom, disease will remain, what it now is, an unknown monster, ravaging at will, mocking the puny attempts made to subdue it, bursting with a laugh the feeble bands we bind around it, & abiding triumphantly on the great secret of its strength yet undiscovered. I have found in short, that I am wandering in a labyrinth, of which no one has yet discovered the clue, and I can hardly hope that the magic guide will be granted to a woman. I came to this Blockley Institution (truly the very gate of Hell) that I might gain more fully than I could hope to do elsewhere, an insight into disease, and the common methods of cure - I have observed as closely as I am able to with the conscientiousness of an earnest seeker for truth - I have watched hundreds of cases, embracing a great variety of disease, and I am compelled to say, that only in a very small number of patients has the treatment evidently produced a cure, in a larger number it has been clearly injurious, and in the majority of instances, it has left me completely in doubt, as to whether the medecines employed were beneficial, nugatory, or detrimental - the more I see of the allopathic practice, the more skeptical I become in relation to it, and I am fully convinced that as a general rule, they cure by chance - of course with this conviction, I look eagerly round for hints of truth, that other systems may offer, I find none however that satisfies me, none that does more than afford hints - Homeopathy I believe embraces a great truth, in its doctrine of specifics, it is in complete accordance with all natural, harmonic laws, & will some day, furnish us with the perfect cure of disease, but the Homeopathists seem to me to have mixed up much absurdity with their truth, I doubt whether they have discovered the true method for its development they are in general complete sectarians and falsify their truth as completely, as the Swedenborgians degrade the sublime revelations of their master - I can not however speak with as much certainty of them, as I can of the Allopathists, having seen very little of their practice, and I shall take every opportunity that I can, to observe candidly the working of their system. I have more faith at present in Hydropathy, than in any other system - though really it hardly deserves the name of a system, for I do not believe it can work one cure according to my idea of cure - it is nevertheless a valuable transition from the blundering barbarism of the past, to the enlightened Homeopathy of the future - it is a great renovator, a powerful hygienic means, and embraces in its innocent action, most of the therapeutic theories of Allopathy, which now so frequently injure, from the poisons used to accomplish them - I have however seen little of hydropathic practice, but I am persuaded that it will furnish valuable aid in future action -

I have spoken of these matters, thinking that it might interest you to know just where I stand amongst the troubled hosts of medical antagonism. I expect to be called an irregular practitioner, for I shall always use common sense and my best judgement, whatever books, or usage, may establish - I shall remain if possible under the old banner, for many reasons - I am conservative by nature, I hate the hammering & dust and ceaseless confusion of destruction - there is a charm to me in the weather-beaten, moss covered institutions of the Past, & I would willingly labor under their protection, for the ground, Heaven descending mandrons of

the Future – then too these fragmentary reforms in medical as well as social science, are one sided, I cannot enter into them with the blind zeal of their advocates, I must look at the truth, which warrants every existence, & yet not being powerful enough, to make others see as I see, to gather together all these scattered truths, and bind in union these fighting brethren, I prefer walking quietly in the smoothest path, and gathering strength for future action. Indeed this complete and healthy growth, if it can in any way be obtained, seems to me of vital importance to every woman. My soul glows with enthusiasm, when I think of the glorious work that woman may accomplish, the sublimity of character to be displayed, the strength of will, the power of combination necessary – you doubt sometimes, woman's faithfulness to her mission, her response to the mighty summons, – so do I when oppressed with the frivolity the stupidity, the meanness, of the little souls that surround me – but away with such doubts, they are unworthy, superficial, atheistic, the great work of the Ages, cannot be done without woman's cooperation – it is a decree of destiny, stronger than individual will, the Power which is now upheaving the masses of mankind, which is impelling the great tide of universal being upward, onward forever in infinite ascension, is already beginning to stir the heart of woman with prophetic longing for the Divine, the possible, the inevitable – verily Woman must & will come to the work – the Almighty works through every medium, & already he is calling his daughters into action – I feel it in my own soul, I have long felt it – no will of my own has led me on, but a power stronger than self

has shaped our course & used me a willing rejoicing instrument for good — this is my living faith, under every possible trial, that I have passed through. I have never once conceived the possibility of denying my mission. even now when portions of my path are shrouded in total darkness & I can see my way clearly in the distance, I know that I shall have power to accomplish my object & I walk on bravely, hopefully. The joy of this faith, is the greatest, & the truest experience of my life, and a testimony to me that woman is being called to her work.

You ask me for my thought on Woman's Independent & Collective action. It is a subject of intensest interest, a study more attractive than any other, but I cannot yet solve the problem — wisdom comes to me slowly, my opinions are continually changing, with enlarging experience, and the past year which has brought me into a larger sphere, shown me more of life than all previous years, has also taught me to observe, to reflect but not yet to judge — Union must come, it is the law of life, but how I cannot tell — sometimes I long for a Messiah to our sex, the great woman that could bind us together in love & power, & lead our conquering hosts in moral conquest. I think of the glorious good she might effect, till the thought seems almost too bright for a vision — but so I have dwelt on that beautiful ideal of the past, the Virgin Mary, till my very soul has bowed in worship before that wonderful conception of purity & thought & essential womanhood — my present faith is, that a general inspiration will be granted, and that gradually as true souls awake to the light of their highest life, attraction will draw them together till a power is generated which will spread abroad & be the centre of a grand union. But I have come to the end of my paper, & have written nothing that I intended to write when I began — I meant to have told you why our ladies sent nothing to your sale — I intended to have expressed to you a little of the joy I felt in renewing personal relations with the Priest of our Cause, after a seven years separation,

Rec'd ~~April 21~~ June 25th 48

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Elizabeth Blackwell
Phila Pa

ans. ~~March 5th~~ " 29 P

Miss Anna L. Dorr
Boston
Mass.

PHILADELPHIA PA
JUN 27
1848

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[COPY]
Blackwell, Elizabeth to Miss Anna Q.T.Parsons

Blackley June 24th 1848.

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Believe me dear Miss Parsons
Your friend

Elizabeth Blackwell.

Address Care of William Elder Esq
30 Chatham St.
Philadelphia

Envelope addressed to Miss Anna Q.T.Parsons
Boston
Mass.